1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

revenge she ' destroyed his seed '. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived. 754

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe. 674 754 578

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mana-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka te jikwa unddna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 789 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 578 [586] Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *poidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 844 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 32 Gon A 32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atarpaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often-called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

DANCE AND SONG

I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Panku of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance.

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'.

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four.

The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *lekna* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rochē* or *tek*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

1

Rere loyo rere le rerela rela. Rere loyo rerela rere rela rela.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534
291

Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

X883
578

Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532(b)]

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 ● 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *kāloti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Kanapur had six wives; in Korlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria
578 families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Orissa tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

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for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bāri,
Tor mutka to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nakti mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

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will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *jatâhi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

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I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lamhada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *mailotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Musalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psycho-neurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

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less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Bahe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamkot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sabapal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi said the two girls got on very well together.

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The expression can be varied into *bāplotia* when it is applied to a girl, but this is less common.

Halbi terms of abuse, used by the Muria but not confined to them, are the usual *nakta* or *nakti*—'noseless', a reference to the habit of removing someone's nose as a penalty for adultery; *pachmār*, a girl who goes to five men; *jutaha*, eater of the leavings of others, a thing forbidden by tribal law; and such words as *tolhi*, slacker, and *gadhi*, donkey. As in Chhattisgarh, references to the pubic hairs are common. 'You can't shave my pubic hairs', 'Can you pull out five of my pubic hairs?', 'Do you want to copulate with my hairs?' are expressions sufficiently insulting, but actually to pull out one or two of these hairs and throw them at an adversary is unforgivable.

The Muria can be very rude if he feels inclined—'Come and eat my penis'; 'Eat your mother's excreta'; 'Come and lick my plate'. *Gukhai* means 'eater of human excrement', *masaha* means 'a gluttonous eater of meat'. 'You have nothing in your own house, but run about licking others' plates.' The Muria are perhaps better at taunts than at abuse, a fact which explains the large number of taunt-songs which, sung amicably enough in the ghotul, equip the singers with weapons suitable for sterner business later on.

In Gondi almost the only abusive expressions have an incestuous reference. There are a few others, but I doubt if they are taken very seriously. I once heard a chelik say quite amiably to a motiari who had failed to clean the ghotul, '*Korka men ormi kattake galla ni pendāna jāhano*, A shed-full of buffaloes are scratching your privates'. And in the songs a not uncommon taunt is 'A jungle boar is rolling in your vagina'. I am told that a word *laria* is used with the same intention as the Chhattisgarhi *bhosri*, and means the penis. But more common is the simple *makka*—a hillman may call the people of the foothills *Jhoria-makka* or 'offspring of a lowlander's penis'; a conceited Raj Gond may be told that he is *Ganda-makka* or 'born of a Ganda', one of the despised weaving castes.

But these are rather unusual. When the Muria gets annoyed, he calls to mind the Table of Affinity and works through it, with special reference to forbidden relatives. Thus we get *niya āwān gatha*, 'I will copulate with your mother', which is usually said by a man to his own son, or classificatory son, to his daughter or younger brother's daughter: and *niya didi na gatha*, 'I will copulate with your elder sister', said by a man to his wife (the elder sister is, of course, in an 'avoidance' relationship).

To a sister's husband, a man may say *Niya ajin penda gatha*, or 'I will copulate with your father's mother' and *Niya kalena gatha*, 'I will copulate with your sister'.

These expressions, it will be noted, do not suggest that the person abused has committed incest or any tribal offence. The speaker proclaims his own intention of doing so—suggesting, I suppose, that his enemy is too weak or too acquiescent to interfere.

Another formula, which can be used in a great many different ways, is a reference to the private parts of various relatives. The Muria go into this with some anatomical detail. They say, for example, *Niya miyar na penda* or 'Your daughter's vagina' but they can also refer to her clitoris—*Niya miyar na titi gutta*—or her *labia majora*, her urethra and her breasts. I am told that a man abuses his sister's son or daughter by reference to their daughter (who is in a forbidden relation to him), and his wife's brother's son by reference to his father's sister who is, of course, his own wife.

These references to one's own wife are the strangest feature of primitive abuse. Nothing rouses stronger passions; nothing—on the face of it—is

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more absurd. A father tells his son or daughter that he will copulate with their mother, an uncle tells his nephew that he will sleep with his aunt. And so he may. But he ought not to talk about it. 578 192

Such a vocabulary of abuse could only effect its object in a society where great stress was laid on family relationships and where the rules of those relationships are strictly observed. It is just because a man never does intrigue with a forbidden relation that the accusation becomes effective and even amusing. If a Muria thought it was really true, he would not say so; for he is a decent fellow, and even in his hottest moments does not want to cause trouble.

The most significant thing about this vocabulary is in its omissions. There are no religious oaths—for they would be too dangerous. There is no suggestion of unnatural offences—for they are practically unknown. There are no references to prostitution—for there are no Muria whores.

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754 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered
683 from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village
578 ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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saw his enemy, got out his bow and arrow and shot him in the stomach.[1]

III

THE POWER OF BLOOD

The belief in the magical power of blood is world-wide, and has been so fully studied that I need only briefly refer to it here. Its virtues are imparted by the blood-covenant, by drinking, by bathing in it and by being baptized in it. Charms against sickness are sometimes written in blood in China. The blood bath was believed to be a cure for leprosy down to the Middle Ages; the idea even occurs in Grimm's fairy-tales where leprosy is treated by a bath of the blood of innocent maidens. Constantine the Great was advised to bathe in the blood of virgin children to cure an illness, but the parents' cries dissuaded him and he was miraculously healed instead.

'In the past', says Haikerwal, 'the custom of human sacrifice was common in India chiefly amongst the Dravidians. One of its forms was Purusamedha, which was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings and at which eleven human beings and eleven barren cows were offered up. The Puranas and Tantras also contain frequent references to Narabali or human sacrifice to the goddess Chandika. These Tantrik sacrifices to Kali or Chandika were formerly common. People were freely offered in the days of Maharatta rule, and in Western India there are many temples existing even today at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. In the North-East of India also human sacrifice to Kali was very common'.[2]

Crooke gives a number of modern examples. 'In 1870, a Mohammedan butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu

[1] This fear of witchcraft is by no means confined to the aboriginals. In 1931, a Gwara schoolmaster in the Central Provinces lost several of his cattle and his children fell ill. He traced the cause to a Powar sorcerer. He dressed up in a green skirt, green shirt, green cap, and put bells on his feet to make himself appear like his goddess and killed the sorcerer with a trident from the village temple. In 1935, some Hindus killed a Gond medicine-man in the Amraoti District because he threw a charmed lemon (believed to be infected with disease) into their compound. In Mandla District in 1935, a Mohammedan Sub-Inspector of Police, believing a Panka woman had "overlooked" his child, sent his constables to force her to remove the charm. She was beaten with castor plants, made to drink water from a Chamar's shoe and subjected to other indignities.

[2] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 66.

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837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY

I

674 In Europe, and indeed wherever modern civilization has made its way, the great majority of murders are murders for gain. Among the Maria also many acts of violence arise in sequel to disputes about property. But there is a great difference between Maria homicide and civilized murder with this motive.

422 428 How few are the possessions of the Maria! There are some little huts of mud and thatch, some weedy cattle, land which is ultimately the property of the State, a few knives and axes, some pots, perhaps a store of grain and a handful of rupees hidden somewhere. When a man dies, questions of inheritance only rarely arise, for after a few valuables have been buried in the grave there is hardly anything left to distribute. Rules of inheritance do, however, exist. After the death of a father his fields are jointly owned by his sons, his brothers and his brothers' sons. Widows and daughters do not usually inherit, though there are a few examples where there is either no obvious rival claimant or the widow is of strong character and has refused to hand over the property of her dead husband to anyone else.

576 428 Quarrels more often arise over the partition of the family goods while the head of the household is alive. The traditional idea was clearly not to partition the family property during the father's lifetime. But nowadays elder sons often desire a share of land or cattle when they set up a separate establishment. Brothers who, after the death of their father, have shared his possessions sometimes quarrel with one another, and desire a formal separation and partition. Where such partition is permitted in the father's lifetime the youngest son, who often remains at home when the older boys go away to live elsewhere, has a special claim over his father's remaining goods.

674 Murders connected with property are not generally

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Murders connected with property are not generally committed for gain in the ordinary sense. They rather arise out of disputes about rights and privileges, and the actual murder is the result of anger and resentment rather than a desire for possession. In several cases indeed murder has been a form of self-defence against someone who tries to take away land or other property that the murderer believes to be his by right. Thus Marvi Buti was the elder brother of Marvi Chule, and for some time they lived in separate villages. Two years before the tragedy, Chule came to live next-door to his elder brother at Bara Gudra and got two of his fields and two tanks for irrigation. Chule cultivated them and paid two rupees as rent. Buti spent the money and when the time for the next payment came round, demanded and recovered four rupees from his younger brother. The following year Buti refused to give Chule any land at all. But Chule, claiming that he had already paid in advance for that year since he had actually paid six rupees and had only cultivated for one year, ploughed up the fields in spite of Buti's protests, and sowed grain in one of them. Buti countered this by giving the fields and the tanks to another brother who used the tanks, but was unable to get possession of the land. Then Buti threatened that he would drive the village cattle into the fields where Chule had sown his crop and would thus destroy it. Chule seems to have felt that it was no use carrying on the unequal struggle any longer, and he decided to leave the village and go elsewhere. He actually built a house in another village, and at the beginning of the rains went to move his possessions. When he reached his old house, he found one of his plantain trees cut down; he was told that Buti had been there and had cut the tree saying that he would cut down Chule in the same way. As he was removing his mahua seed from the building, someone came running to say that Buti was approaching with a knife in his hand. Chule got his axe and faced his enemy. Apparently Buti tried to run away, but Chule followed him and killed him.

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Now here, although the tragedy arose out of a question about property, it is evident that Chule was not moved by the desire of gain. Indeed he had abandoned his claim to the fields in dispute, for he had already moved to another village where he would get new land. I think it is probable

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674 that he never intended to kill Buti. But when he reached his old house and found his tree cut down, and when on top of this he saw his enemy approaching with a knife in his hand, the double passions of revenge and fear so moved him that he lost all control and went out to kill his adversary. It is said indeed that, as he pursued him, he shouted that they would both die together.

674 578 Another incident developed on similar lines. Dudhi Bhima and his uncle Marvi Deva lived on opposite sides of a field at Pordem, and cultivated it jointly. The real owner of the land had abandoned the field on the death of his father some eight years previously. Four years later Deva's father also died, and when Deva himself fell ill, he decided that whatever good or evil spirit was in occupation there was dangerous and he too abandoned the land and moved to another village. For four years Bhima cultivated the land as a sub-tenant of the original owner, Sori Masa. According to the State Law Masa forfeited his right to his land by sub-letting it for a period longer than three years, and Bhima actually had, by virtue of long residence, become the real owner, though in typical aboriginal fashion he never thought of getting this officially recorded. All went well, however, until in the middle of 1929 Marvi Deva, apparently persuaded that the supernatural danger from the field was not as great as he had feared, or perhaps as a result of performing the necessary prophylactic sacrifices, returned to the village and claimed the land. Bhima refused to surrender it, and in the summer and rains of 1930 he ploughed it and sowed and reaped his crop. After the field was cleared Marvi Deva decided on forcible measures, and one morning he started ploughing the field with the idea of sowing rape seed on it. His nephew did nothing at the moment, but that evening he went to his uncle's house and killed him while he was sitting by the fire after supper.

674 In this case it might conceivably be said that Bhima's crime was a crime for gain, because once the uncle was out of the way, he would be left in undisturbed possession of the field. But it is much more likely that the crime was one of sheer anger and revenge. In the first place, as we have seen, the land belonged legally to Bhima and he could easily have asserted his right to it by preferring a claim to any

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State official. Secondly he must have known that after killing his uncle so openly—he made confession immediately to the Zamindar of Sukma—he would not be able to enjoy the fruit of his crime. Bhima's action was indeed judicial and an expression of his indignation against the anti-social conduct of his uncle. Unhappily he chose far too drastic a means of indicating his displeasure.

The case of Marvi Khotla arose out of a dispute about the partition of property. After the death of Manjhi Wijja, his sons Bande and Khotla inherited his property and continued to share the land and cattle. At the time of the murder Bande was about sixty years old and had succeeded his father as headman or Peda of the village. All the family cattle, though actually the joint property of the two brothers, were in his hands. The younger brother was anxious to have his own share separate. But since he and Bande were married to two sisters and were practically one family of which Bande regarded himself as the patriarchal head, the villagers and Bande himself did not consider that there was a sufficient case for partition. Khotla, however, was continually badgering his elder brother, and one day at the beginning of the monsoon he went at sunset to Bande's house and standing before it demanded his share. Bande as usual put him off on some pretext, and there was the usual quarrel. Khotla went home and had his supper. During supper his wife, who was, it will be remembered, the sister of Bande's wife, urged him not to quarrel about the cattle. But directly after supper Khotla again went back to Bande's house and abused him violently. He sat down by the fire, and continued for some time shouting at him. Bande was gradually getting more and more annoyed, and it is said that he exclaimed that he would kill Khotla if he did not keep quiet. A little later he declared, 'I am the Peda of this village, and I will have to beat you if you abuse me like this'. Presently Khotla's own wife came and begged her husband to stop quarrelling and come home to bed. But the man took no notice, and continued shouting every sort of foul abuse until at last Bande came quietly out of his house and knocked him senseless to the ground. The next day shortly after noon he died, and his wife beat a drum in order to give the alarm.

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674 678 It is not easy to say whether Bande's motive here was primarily to keep control of the family property or not. His feelings were probably very mixed. He was an elderly man and the Peda of the village. Division of his herd of cattle might do something to lower his prestige. As Peda he was accustomed to give abuse, not to receive it. He believed, and in this he had the support of the villagers, that his brother's claim was unreasonable. Outraged dignity, wounded pride and sheer exasperation probably played as strong a part in his catastrophic revenge as any other motives.

Sometimes the quarrels arise about what may seem to the outsider quite trivial matters, though we should never fall into the error of judging the value of things to an aboriginal by our own standards. For example, two murders were committed on account of cocks, one a cock that was needed at a feast in honour of a brother-in-law and the other a fighting-cock.[1] In another case the quarrel arose between two brothers about the possession of a drum which was sold for two rupees ten annas, out of which the real owner only got a rupee.[2] In yet another case a youth murdered his own father as a result of a dispute over a tobacco crop. The son had a debt of four rupees to pay, and he asked his father to give him the tobacco so that he could sell it and pay off his debt. The father wanted the proceeds to buy clothes for himself. Tempers rose quickly and soon the father was saying that his son could sell the children to pay off his debt, but he would never part with his tobacco, a remark that cost him his life.[3]

II

762 Suicides from economic causes are extremely rare. This remarkable fact has been noticed also for the Bantu in South Africa. 'Conditions of starvation, prolonged droughts and disease among live-stock', says Laubscher, 'are common, and still no cases of suicides are known to magistrates of as much as thirty years' experience which can be considered as the result of despair in the face of economic difficulties'.[4] Only one Bison-horn Maria, Veko Lakhma, killed himself as the

[1] See Case Nos 52 and 18.
[2] Case No 86.
[3] Case No 40.
[4] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 290.

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Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Halkarwal, op. cit., p. 25.

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II

HUSBAND AND WIFE

674 578 The murder by Veko Chamru of his wife and two children and his subsequent execution which thus removed a whole family from the world, makes a strange and sombre tale. Chamru and his wife Hirme had two young children, a daughter of ten called Lakhmi and a son of six named Hando. Apparently for some time they had not been getting on very well. One day Chamru asked his wife to husk rice, as he had to give his share of the Maharaja's tribute at Dassara, but she refused to do it. He brought some sweets for his children and dried fish from the Alnar bazaar. But when he gave them to his daughter, Hirme snatched them out of her hand and threw them away. The woman was evidently suffering from an extreme form of sulks. She refused to husk rice for supper and she did not cook food that evening or the next morning. The husband went to bathe in the river taking his little daughter with him, but she fetched the child back, and when he returned to the house he found that Hirme had gone away with the two children. She went to a friend's house and told her that she was frightened of her husband, and stayed there two days. She then went to another friend and again stayed two days and went away in the night. At last she went to the house of Chamru's uncle, and he advised her not to quarrel with her husband and told her to go home. The woman came back, but sat at a distance of about a hundred yards from the house and shouted to Chamru that she was going to leave him. He had to go out to get his cattle, and on his return found that his wife had disappeared. After a few days he left his house in charge of a boy, and went to the Alnar bazaar. He met a friend, drank some liquor with him and the two men did not start home till evening. On the way they met Hirme with the two children. Chamru scolded her asking her where she had been and saying he would kill her. When they came to the cross-roads near their village, Chamru went home with his wife and children and his friend turned off by another path. When they got home the boy, who had been left in charge of the house, was there and in his

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presence Chamru twice struck his wife on the back with the handle of his axe.

That night one of the neighbours was watching his crops as usual and as he was going home after making a round of the fields, he heard a noise in Chamru's house. He went there and found the man sitting near the door supporting his dead wife in his arms and weeping loudly. Chamru declared that he had killed her. The neighbour went away and brought his friends, and before them Chamru declared that he had hanged his wife and children because they had run away. He said that he would get another wife the next morning, and tried to borrow rice and bullocks for her bride-price.

The people then went to the house, and found the dead body of Hirme lying near the door and the little boy and girl hanging from a rafter. The next day they went to the police station and reported that Hirme had hanged herself, and the two children had followed her example, during Chamru's absence at the Alnar bazaar.

It is evident that Chamru intended to make a deal with the villagers. He supposed that, if he frankly admitted what he had done and paid suitable compensation, they would agree to hush the matter up, and indeed it is obvious that they did agree to do so. What they did not realize was that a police investigation was bound to discover the weak points in their story. Directly the police came to investigate the alleged suicides, they found suspicious inconsistencies. For example, the knot by which the rope round the boy's neck was tied was not a slip-knot, and it would have been difficult for him to have died by strangulation under the circumstances. The girl's neck was tied with a cloth which was hardly adapted to kill her, and her feet were hanging close to a heap of rice on which she could easily have supported herself. The medical evidence immediately disposed of any idea that the three victims had met their deaths by hanging. The usual marks of such a death—constriction of the neck, ligature mark in the neck interrupted at one side, open eyes, protruding tongue, clenched hands, dislocation of the second vertebra from the first—were absent. Medical opinion was that the cause of death in all three cases was congestion of

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674 the chest due to shock, but it was certainly not due to hanging.

626 When these facts were put to the villagers they, seeing that the matter was known, changed their attitude; and three different lots of people, none of whom apparently had any kind of enmity towards Chamru in spite of his allegations to that effect, described how on the night of the murder he had admitted killing his wife and children. Chamru, however, insisted that he had not met his wife and children on the way back from the bazaar as the witnesses described, but that on reaching home late at night he had, as he entered, collided against the naked corpse of his wife hanging from the roof. He had taken a blazing piece of wood and had discovered his son and daughter in a similar plight. He had cut down his wife's naked body and wrapped it in the cloth with which she had hanged herself, and had sat there weeping and wondering whether he himself should not commit suicide.

There was abundant evidence, however, that Chamru had met his wife and children on the way home from the Alnar bazaar and had gone with them to the house. He was seen in their company by the boy who had been left to guard the building. Nobody saw what happened from sunset until late at night when his perhaps not wholly hypocritical cries of distress attracted the attention of a neighbour. But it is obvious that he was present in the house, and that no other person could have come in and killed his wife and children. Frustrated sexual desire, injured pride, jealousy at the children's affection for their mother, hunger and fatigue (for Hirme's absence meant there was no one to cook or do the house-work) drove the distracted man to a shocking vengeance and his own death on the scaffold in the end.

674 578 Marvi Paklu and his wife Dallo had been married for about three years, and had two children who died. They got on fairly well together for some time. But particularly after the death of the children disagreements arose; Dallo appears to have been that rather unusual type among aboriginals, a frigid woman who refused full sexual privileges to her husband and yet at the same time was jealous of him and possessive. Two years after their marriage she went to an uncle at Dilmilli without any proper clothes and only

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wearing a small bit of cloth for decency. She declared that she had been beaten by her husband and turned out of the house. According to one version of what happened, she stayed at Dilmilli for a whole year. According to Paklu's own story, he went for her after a week and brought her home. This is, I think, more likely. But it is quite possible that Dallo then for a whole year refused to live with him as his wife.

Paklu's home was at Muskonta, a little hamlet of only three houses, among rocks and woods near Mutanpal. One of the houses belonged to an old widow called Wage, whose widowed daughter Jimme had come to live with her. Jimme was an attractive girl, and she and Dallo became great friends; they used to go out together to get leaves, fruit and mushrooms. As Dallo got more and more frigid towards her husband, she used to go every night to sleep in Jimme's house. The result was what perhaps might be expected. Paklu, rejected by his wife, fell in love with his wife's friend. One afternoon in July 1939 Paklu and Jimme arranged to meet in a cave among the rocks of a hill about half a mile from the hamlet. That afternoon as one of the neighbours was sitting on his verandah, he saw Paklu going to the place and a little afterwards Jimme following him. But then to his dismay he observed Dallo going in the same direction with a basket in her hand.

The prosecution story was that Paklu and Jimme were together in the cave and were in the act of intercourse when Dallo discovered them. She asked her husband what he was doing there and struck Jimme with a thin bamboo stick. Paklu, naturally enraged at the interruption, got up and pulled off his wife's cloth, trying to shame her by making her naked. He struck her on the head twice with the blunt side of his axe. She fell down, and then Paklu knelt on her chest and twisted her neck till she died. He dragged her out into the forest and left her body there. Her combs and ornaments and the basket were hidden by Jimme. Paklu went to get some bamboos and returned home. When the body was found, he declared that his wife had been killed by a tiger.

But later Paklu first declared that he had caught his wife having intercourse with another man, who ran away as he

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674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife ● 578 and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

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the fault of his wife and daughter, who had not tied the calf up properly in the evening. Hurra's wife was well known for her quick temper; she was continually quarrelling, especially if her husband ventured to interfere with household matters, and it is said that the daughter had learnt to take her mother's side. After the quarrel about the calf, the older woman set fire to their house and took her daughter away to the field-house out in their clearing. Here she first hanged her daughter and then herself.

Yet another wife from the same area, Galle, was obviously a bad housewife; she used to tell her husband that she would throw their child on the ground if he ordered her to do any work. On the day of her death she had been asked to prepare leaf-cups and food for the whole family—a large one. This seems to have been the immediate cause of disturbance, and she hanged herself. But there was undoubtedly a long and miserable tale of domestic unhappiness behind it.

In three remarkable cases it was the husband who committed suicide from remorse and sorrow. Barse Chewa asked his wife, a sick and miserable woman, to light the fire early in the morning. She was rather slow about it and Chewa beat and kicked her, knocking her unconscious. He was so ashamed and frightened that he killed himself. Sori Deva, angry at the loss of two of his cows, miserable because he had beaten his wife, did the same. So did Marvi Dhodsa who beat his wife, who was suffering from sore eyes, for not keeping the baby quiet. That night Dhodsa felt very miserable; he realized that his wife was ill, that he had no right to beat her, and that the child too had sore eyes and was bound to cry. He crept out of the house and hanged himself on a mahua tree with his own cloth.

III

THE POLYGAMOUS HOME

The strains and stresses of a polygamous household do not appear to result in tragedy so often as we might expect. Polygamy is not perhaps very common among the Maria, for the simple reason that there are not enough women to make it often possible. Those men who do keep more than one

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595 wife at a time are generally the sort of people who would make a success of anything, even of so complicated a matrimonial adventure as this. The rough, dominating Goge, for example, was exactly the sort of person who would have had three wives.[1] Oyami Masa, who killed his younger wife at Khutepal, was again a strong, powerful, interesting character, a typical polygamist. And indeed provided the husband treats his wives with more or less equal consideration, and provided he is sufficiently potent to satisfy them all, there is a chance that such a domestic arrangement may succeed. But woe betide the 'good' husband, whose virtues are those that civilization may applaud, who enters on this experiment.

674 595 578 The failures that come to light are not many, but they are interesting. Sometimes the jealousies and quarrels lead to murder, sometimes to suicide. At Khutepal I visited the family of Oyami Masa, and met the charming old lady who was his senior wife. He was just out of jail after a year's imprisonment for killing his younger wife, Tokki. Tokki was a widow and by no means young, for her son by her previous husband had been old enough to go to the Tea Gardens of Assam. At the beginning of 1940, when Tokki had been living with Masa for about six months, the son returned from the Tea Gardens bringing three bits of cloth with him as a present for his mother. Masa, as one would expect, took possession of the cloth and this naturally upset Tokki very much. She declared that the older wife had persuaded him to keep the cloth simply in order to be vexatious. Masa replied that, since he was the head of the house and was feeding her and her son and everyone else, it did not matter whether he kept the cloth or she did. The quarrel—as such quarrels do—went on and on and at last during supper one evening Masa got so angry at the woman's nagging on the subject that he picked up a stick and beat her. It is not known how hard he beat her or whether he intended to kill her or not, since he had the body cremated immediately. For the woman died. No report was made to the police for three weeks by which time all the evidence had disappeared, and it was impossible for the court to do more than to sentence Masa to a year's imprisonment under

[1] See Case No 71.

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674 578 595 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing hurt to his wife.

At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During [626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had [783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

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annas each for not living happily together. One morning the elder wife went to fetch Harma from the field-hut where he had been sleeping, and found him dead, killed by the younger woman who could not endure his ill-treatment longer.

The complications and petty miseries of a polygamous home are illustrated in the story of how Sori Dome murdered her elder co-wife, Chule. Even while their husband was alive, the two women were always quarrelling. Three years before his death Dome beat Chule over the head with a bit of a broken plough, and Chule took a whole month to recover from the blow. Dome used continually to threaten the older woman that one day she would kill her. After the husband's death, matters got even worse. Chule was old and feeble and suffered from yaws, which made her irritable and exacting. But the two women continued to live together, along with their husband's elder brother, in their husband's house. Just before the tragedy, Chule made peevish complaints that Dome had been extravagant in using up the rice, to which the other replied that, since she had eaten it, it was not wasted. One evening, after they had been working in the fields and quarrelling all the time, they set out to go home. Dome had an axe in her hand and her two children were with her. Chule was carrying a bamboo basket. Dome urged the old woman to hurry up, but she replied that her feet were hurting her and she would follow later. Exasperated, Dome pushed Chule by the back of her neck and then struck her a blow with the axe. The old woman fell down, and Dome hit her again and she seems to have died on the spot. Medical examination, however, showed that there was no fracture and no dislocation either in the head or ribs where the blows had fallen. Dome did not use the sharp edge of the axe, and it is possible that she did not intend to kill the woman, but only wanted to teach her a lesson. On the other hand, of course, it was greatly to her advantage that Chule should be eliminated.

It is perhaps rather surprising that there is not more suicide in polygamous households. But it does, of course, occur. Bandi, headman of Khutepal, had two wives. They quarrelled and the elder woman hanged herself. Masa of Samgiri also had two wives, and the younger girl quarrelled

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with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157-67.

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607 sometimes lead to trouble. To the younger man, his elder brother's wife is delightful because she is accessible and does not burden his conscience. To the elder man, the younger girl is doubly attractive because she is forbidden. The word [601] 'brother', of course, under the classificatory system of relationship, includes also male relations who are more usually called cousins.

674 A youth Hemla Bakka killed his wife Jimme for having 578 betrayed him with his elder cousin Hemla Dhurwa. During 607 the season when the mangoes ripen, Jimme had gone with Dhurwa to collect and eat the fruit, and the husband suspecting them followed and watched them secretly. Dhurwa climbed the tree and shook it; the woman collected the fallen mangoes, and they ate them together. Then Dhurwa took her behind some bushes and was about to have intercourse with her, when Bakka appeared and separated them. Some time later Bakka returned suddenly from his field to drink water and discovered Dhurwa coming out of his house. He said that he would report the matter to the village elders. When he scolded his wife for her behaviour, she retorted that she would live with the man she loved and that nothing could prevent her. There was then a regular family quarrel, in which Bakka's father was beaten, and this so enraged the boy that he struck his wife a heavy blow on the head and killed her. There can be no doubt that in this case Bakka's feelings were outraged not only because his wife was unfaithful, but because she was unfaithful with a forbidden person, an act which might bring all manner of supernatural vengeance upon him—cattle might die and he himself might be afflicted with a psycho-dropsical swelling.

Another case of the same kind is that of Marvi Boti of Telam. Boti and his younger brother Kosa were living with their father, and were both married. Boti's wife died and he fell in love with his younger brother's wife, though the villagers said that it was really the girl who made overtures to Boti and threatened to commit suicide if he did not marry her. Kosa suspected his wife and beat her, and this seems to have decided Boti, for a week later he ran away with the girl to the Jeypore Zamindari. After about three weeks Boti

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decided to go to his father's house to get his children by his former wife. The girl insisted on going with him. As they were approaching Telam they had the misfortune to meet Kosa coming along the same path. Apparently some people returning from a bazaar had told him that Boti had returned, and he had set out to seek vengeance armed with a *gagra*. When the boy saw his elder brother, he said, 'My fate is good, for it has sent you to me, since you have run away with my wife'. And so saying he struck Boti across the face. At that Boti seized his brother by his arms, and there was a struggle in the course of which Kosa was killed.

Gagra knife
(*Length* 18")

When Boti returned from jail, he had to make special offerings in addition to undergoing the usual ceremony of purification. Since he had kept his younger brother's wife, he had to sacrifice to the Departed of his house, and to his clan-god. If he had not done this, his body would have swollen and he would have died. As it was, he was impotent for a whole year after he was released from jail.

V

It is perhaps surprising that there are not more murders as a result of the liberties allowed a youth with his elder brother's wife. Boti stood in this pleasant relation to Mase and as a result they poisoned Mase's husband in order that they could be regularly married. The murder of Tati Hirme was due to her rejection of her dead husband's younger brother when he came to claim her.

It is possible that the remarkable forbearance shown by Ujji Poda towards Kopa, his younger cousin-brother, who was in love with his wife, Ragho, was due to his realization that Kopa was not breaking any tribal or social conventions:

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574 593 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 578 There have been several suicides arising out of this situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

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refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (*Length* 3½")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

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762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
574 that he ended his life.
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A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

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586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage is celebrated before the end of his term of service.

X 674 ● 578 583 Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

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situation. The first reproduced incidents that are constantly happening all over India. Kalmumi Masa was living as a Lamhada in the house of his mother-in-law, a widow named Hungi. He was already married to the girl, Kohale, though he was still fulfilling his contract of service. The two women, as often happens when they deal with a youth of this kind (for the Lamhada as a poor boy and often without relatives is generally despised), were careless in their treatment of him, and did not bother to cook his meals properly. A few days before the tragedy they went out for a funeral ceremony, and Hungi only sent Kohale home very late in the evening to see to her husband's food. When he found that nothing had been prepared, he was very angry and for fear of being beaten the girl ran away and spent the night in a fig tree.

The next day a panchayat was called to consider the relations of Masa and his wife. Masa objected to his affairs being discussed in public, and probably suspected that his mother-in-law had too much influence with the panchayat. He had to be forcibly brought to the meeting which decided that the women were not cooking properly for the boy, and ordered them to behave better in future. But Masa was also reproved. He was slapped by the Gaita (priest) and ordered not to beat his wife who was six months with child. Masa was very angry at this, and removed his things from Hungi's house. He no longer took his meals there, but only went there to sleep. He did not go away immediately to another village, because he wanted to take his wife with him, get his share of the rice crop and make arrangements for removing his cattle.

Hungi, of course, did not want to lose Masa's services. As a widow she was entirely dependent on him for the cultivation of her land. She persuaded her daughter to refuse to go away with him, and did everything she could to stop him removing his rice. On the eve of the tragedy the boy filled three baskets with the grain, and put them ready for removal the following morning. Hungi said that she would on no account let him take the rice, and spent the night sleeping in front of it, on guard with her two children. Early in the morning Masa went to get his property. The old woman tried to prevent him; Masa flew

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into a rage, struck her heavily and killed her. Kohale tried to intervene, and he so injured her also that she died a fortnight later.

Marvi Risami was the Maria blacksmith of Bastanar. Towards the end of 1934 he brought a youth, Markami Wango, to serve as a Lamhada for his young daughter Paike. The boy worked in the house for about a year and a half, and Risami intended to celebrate the marriage in 1936.

All went well at first. But there was living in the house a youth of about Wango's age, Marvi Kuma, a son of Risami's elder brother, whose parents had died when he was a child and who had been, for all practical purposes, adopted by the Bastanar household. This boy was thus, according to the classificatory system of relationship, Paike's brother and, of course, belonged to the same clan. Any relationship between the two would be regarded by tribal custom as extremely serious, as a form of incest. In spite of this, however, Kuma and Paike were greatly attracted by each other and Paike soon found that she had little time to give to her betrothed Wango. One day at the end of the hot weather, Wango and Paike went with Kuma and another youth, Kosa, to the hill near Lakhapal to get ore for smelting in the smithy. When they arrived there, Kosa went to the village on some business of his own and Wango accompanied him to get a drink of water. It is possible that he deliberately left Kuma and Paike together with the idea of spying on them and catching them *in flagranti*. He returned quietly and claims that he caught them actually in the act of intercourse. He threw a stone at his rival but missed him, and then chased him with a knife. Kuma ran away, and when Kosa rejoined the party, he found Wango quarrelling with Paike and throwing stones at her. Wango declared that he would kill all the people of the Marvi clan, and would either be hanged or run away to the Tea Gardens.

About a month later, the whole family with a number of other relatives and neighbours went to Handa Khodra to fetch grass for the thatching of their houses at the beginning of the rains (it was 2 June 1936), and when they got home late in the afternoon they found Risami with a pot of rice-beer and everyone had a little. Apparently no one was actually intoxicated, but they were at least revived after

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their long day's work. That night at supper Wango accused Kuma of allowing Paike to flirt with him and of distracting her affections from himself. The boy seems to have been

[301]

Necklace in Muria style, part of a dancing outfit

genuinely upset at his betrothed's lack of interest in him and her frigid attitude. He threatened to shoot her with an arrow. Kuma told his uncle Risami about this, and the old man got angry and declared that it was disgraceful of Wango to accuse a girl betrothed to him of so serious a crime as incest, and hit the boy twice. Wango caught hold of his future father-in-law, but the others separated them. So Wango walked out of the house. Risami followed to bring him back, for he had no desire to lose such a useful person

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as a Lamhada. But Wango threw a stone at him, hitting him on the back of the head and making it bleed. Risami then went to the village headman and reported the matter, and they arranged with the Kotwar to hold an enquiry the next morning.

While Risami and the others were at the headman's house, Wango returned home to fetch his dancing kit. This was not the usual bison-horn outfit, but a collection of small and big bells, waist-band and necklaces. It looks as though he had decided to leave the house and abandon his duties as Lamhada out of disgust with the family that seemed allied against him. While he was removing the dancing things, Paike came out of the house and stopped him, saying that they belonged to her and had been given her by her parents. Paike's mother, who was eight months pregnant and was lying in the house, also seems to have shouted to the boy abusively to return the things. Wango, already in a towering rage, drew his bow and shot the girl just below the left breast. She lived till the following morning but then died of an acute generalized peritonitis.

In Court Wango declared that on the night of the quarrel he had again caught Kuma having intercourse with Paike, and that this had so enraged him that he had gone to remove his possessions from the house. But when Paike and her mother tried to stop him he shot the girl. This part of the story was doubted, since the other members of the party declared that Kuma had gone with Risami to make a report to the headman. But obviously everybody was concerned to hush up the matter of Paike's intimacy with her cousin-brother, and it is possible that Wango, who appears to have had something of the voyeur's temperament, may have again been hanging about to catch them together and may have again succeeded.

It is interesting that the immediate cause of this murder, like the last, was the attempt by the women of the house to prevent a Lamhada from going away and removing his property. It is not easy to say whether Wango found the loss of his property, or the sight of his betrothed in the arms of another man the more provocative. I think probably it was the struggle over the dancing outfit that really provoked the murder.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CRIME OF REVENGE

1

MOTIVES of revenge and implacable enmity operate in many 201
cases. The Maria have various symbolic methods of expressing their hatred. One of these is to remove three handfuls of straw from an enemy's roof. This was done in a case where the murderer had a long-standing enmity with his victim, which came to a head over a quarrel about the cutting of an embankment. Another symbol is to pull out a few of the pubic hairs and to whistle loudly with one finger in the mouth. This was done by Muchaki Dasru shortly before he killed a man for not giving him the tribute that was due to him as Siraha of the village, and by Marvi Oyami Masa as he led his party to murder his cousin. Kartami Aitu dipped his hand in his victim's blood and made a mark on his own head. He cut the ground of the threshold with his axe in dramatic symbol of his triumph over the dead man's family.[1]

In some cases hostility between two Maria may continue 578
for years before it breaks out into open conflict. Thus Vetti Hirma had been on bad terms for several years with Rawa Hirma, who was ultimately to be his victim. It began by a quarrel over land. Then when both were probably a little drunk at a Chikma New Eating festival, they tried to shoot each other with arrows, but missed their aim. It was only [674]x after three years that at last the theft of a pumpkin aroused Vetti Hirma to such a state of revengeful anger that he beat his enemy to death.

Outraged family pride that craved revenge, desire to 674x
eliminate a tiresome suitor, and a chivalrous sense of protectiveness towards a girl were combined in the murder of Muka, the young Siraha of Surnar. He was in love with Kume, the daughter of Poyami Irma and one day in March 1935 he went to Ghatom with a pot of sago palm juice to ask

[1] In 1939, in a Telanga case, the murderer stabbed his victim with an arrow, disembowelled him with a knife, extracted the liver, and bit off a portion of it. But was this for revenge or magic?

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the time for trembling'. He took the axe out of Bhima's hand and struck the landlord two more blows with the sharp edge. Just then they caught sight of two men coming by. They hurriedly dropped their weapons and stood upright with their hands straight down round the landlord's body so that the passers-by could not see what was happening. These men were going to get some meat from a dead cow which was lying near a tank in the next village. They do not seem to have seen anything, and went on their way. Another witness came by and he saw Pandu look cautiously round and then rub the blade of his axe in the earth and throw it down beside the landlord's body. This witness was so frightened that he did not go to get meat from the dead cow as he originally intended, but went home and lay down.

This story shows on the one hand an unusual degree of premeditation and a careful adherence to plan, and on the other a rather unusual susceptibility on the part of some of those concerned in the affair. The youth Bhima, who was Pandu's bond-servant, evidently had no heart in the business and trembled so much after striking one blow that he could do no more. One witness was so frightened that he could hardly walk and had to go home and lie down. Without the urging of Pandu, who seems to have been an unusual type of criminal, the other men would certainly have never carried out the plan. For this reason Pandu was sentenced to death and was executed, and the other murderers went for life-imprisonment.

III

The subject of aboriginal abuse or gali is obscure, and outsiders often find it hard to understand why expressions that are continually used in ordinary conversation should sometimes arouse the most passionate feelings of indignation. The most abusive terms are sometimes actually used in love-making, and a Maria employs the word *mailotia*, for example, which means 'cohabit with your mother' as freely as a British soldier uses the word 'bloody' and generally with as little meaning.

For gali to be offensive everything depends on the

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674 occasion, the tone of voice and the relationship of the people 578 concerned. Word-magic is an important and dangerous 195 element in Maria life. A witch can make a man impotent by giving him 'corpse-abuse'. It is possible for a man to use a normally inoffensive expression in a certain tone of voice, which under the circumstances is so dangerous and insulting as to lead to murder. A mother-in-law, for example, may abuse her son-in-law privately as much as she wishes. But if she shouts an insulting epithet at him in the presence of half the village, she has committed an unbearable insult.

674 Two types of abuse are not used in ordinary conversation. You do not call somebody a thief, unless you want trouble. You certainly do not call anyone a witch or a wizard. In a number of our cases the allegation that someone was a thief or a wizard led to murder.

Excreta-abuse is also not very common in daily life. In several cases it has led to murder. Thus the elder of two brothers told the younger that he was eating excreta. A son-in-law killed his father-in-law when he told him that he ate the excreta and drank the urine of his wife. A nephew killed his aunt for accusing him of eating excreta.

On two occasions fathers were killed by sons for insulting them. One father told his son to 'get out of the house' and was killed for it. Another father, who was asked by his son for a loan of money, replied that the boy might sell his own children for the money, but he would not get it from him. Such remarks were not to be endured.

Markami Turka killed his elder brother's wife Kosi for abusing him. He told her that if she did not do her work properly he would not give her cattle for cultivation, and she replied that 'her pubic hairs would not be pulled up' if she did not get them. This ought not to have greatly offended someone in that relationship, but it did: probably it was the way she said it.

Yet another case (not in our list) in which a father was murdered by his son was when a youth about nineteen years old, Poyami Lakhma, killed his father Linga in 1940. The two men had a drunken quarrel, and the father abused his son and told him to get out of his house. As before, this seems to have been regarded by the boy as an almost

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unbearable insult. He replied, 'Why did you not kill me and throw me away while I was a child, if you want to turn me out of your house now?' The father replied, 'I will kill you even now and throw you away'. He also called the boy *chor* (thief), *mailotia* (one who cohabits with his mother) and Dher (a member of the despised Mahara caste). Finally he said, 'You are not my son, and whose son you are I cannot say'. At last the boy, driven to madness by these insults, struck his father with an axe and killed him.

The most common abuse in everyday life is based on straightforward natural sex—there are no words, as in Europe, associated with perversion—the words *mailotia* and *baplotia*, suggestions that somebody should lick the private parts or eat the pubic hairs, insinuations about the chastity of wife or sisters. Such abuses are so common that they should not normally rouse anyone to the pitch of intense excitement necessary for committing homicide. But in several of our cases, though it was these expressions that were reported in Court as the cause of provocation, I think probably many other unpleasant expressions were actually employed. Some Maria are sufficiently intelligent, when they are pleading provocation, to mention the things which they think would provoke the Court rather than the things that really provoked them.

Educated people are sometimes puzzled why the rude, coarse aboriginal should be so offended at a little bad language. But the truth is that there is a strict etiquette in these matters, and while a lot of filthy talk is tolerated provided the conditions are right, any breach of the rules will cause an explosion of temper that may end in tragedy. It is probable too that the abuse releases an instinct for revenge that is unconscious. Stanley Hall says,

> The instinct of revenge is very deep-seated, and not entirely eradicable. In abnormal cases it is instantaneous and perhaps unconscious. I have myself talked with perhaps a score of youthful murderers under sentence of death, who, I believe, were in every way as good by nature as I am, but who in an instant of fulminating anger struck the fatal blow, possibly harder than they knew or because a weapon was at hand, and killed, it may be, their best friend with a regret no less than